



November 9, 2001

Mr. James L. Hall
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342

OR2001-5186

Dear Mr. Hall:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 154661.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for copies of the applications, interview documentation, and notes on all four applicants for an institutional parole officer position as well as a copy of the "board questions and answers." You claim that some of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.117 and 552.122 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We first address your contention that interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. Section 552.122(b) excepts from disclosure test items developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined that the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated, but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. Whether information falls within the section 552.122 exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Open Records Decision No. 626 at 6 (1994). Having reviewed the submitted questions, we agree that questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are "test items" as contemplated by section 552.122(b). Therefore, you may withhold these questions and the corresponding answers under section 552.122(b).

¹Because you seek to withhold only a portion of the requested information, we assume you have released the remainder of the responsive information. If you have not already released the remainder of the responsive information, you must do so now. See Gov't Code §§ 552.021, .221, .301, .302.

Next, you contend that the requested information includes social security numbers that are excepted from disclosure under section 552.117 of the Government Code. Section 552.117 provides, in relevant part:

Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information that relates to the home address, home telephone number, or social security number, or that reveals whether the following person has family members:

...

(3) an employee of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, regardless of whether the employee complies with Section 552.024

....

Consequently, we agree that, to the extent the requested information contains the social security number of a department employee, you must withhold the social security number under section 552.117(3).

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Tex. Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Nathan E. Bowden
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NEB/sdk

Ref: ID# 154661

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Ms. Pamela Lind
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Beeville, Texas 78102
(w/o enclosures)